Using Volunteer Drivers Transcript

0:00

and with that i will turn it over to kyle who will be your presenter today

0:06

thank you scott um my name is kyle kleist i am the executive director

0:11

at the center for independent libyan for western wisconsin located in menomonee wisconsin about an hour straight east

0:18

from minneapolis i am a shall we say

0:23

older 50s uh caucasian male with grain hair uh gray goatee and square rim glasses

0:32

welcome everybody um i am going to then now introduce uh my co-presenter or our

0:40

primary presenter bobby craig hi i'm bobby um

0:47

transportation director for the center for independent living our program the

0:53

transportation program is called new freedom transportation i am

0:58

older i guess female caucasian with red hair um no facial hair

1:05

um and i'll be presenting about the actual program itself so

1:14

all right

1:21

so let me get begins again uh building a volunteer driver program

1:26

so how do you use volunteer drivers to meet the transportation needs of people with disabilities living in rural areas

1:33

our answer was new freedom transportation so i'll explain a little bit

1:39

what is new freedom so our why was new freedom needed well one of the things we came across was a

1:47

lack of affordable and accessible transportation options for people with disabilities especially in our service

1:53

area which is predominantly rural we had trips funded for medical dental

2:00

even mental health counseling so otherwise than these medicaid funded trips there wasn't a lot of options

2:07

available for people so why did cilw get into the

2:12

transportation business one lack of transportation options was a major barrier for our consumers

2:19

especially those in rural areas and our three-year strategic plan so

2:25

during our three-year strategic plan which all independent living centers do transportation became one of our main

2:33

areas to address and then we had some opportunities come our way

2:39

so what do you need to know before you begin what is the scope of the problem so what

2:46

we did we surveyed consumers we wanted to know where are you going

2:53

where are what are your current transportation needs what are your barriers and then

2:59

where would you like to go if you had transportation available where are the places that you would like to go

3:06

and then we needed to know who are the providers out there so who's currently providing

3:12

transportation in your area are they specialized medical vehicles those that do the m8 transportation

3:19

veterans programs aging programs and then where are all of these

3:25

trips going are they primarily for medical so need to do your homework is one of the

3:33

biggest things that always comes up and then collaboration is the key

3:40

who are the players when it comes to transportation especially in your area

3:47

you need to know who are all the providers who are the funders as well

3:52

and then finding opportunities to collaborate one of the things that is required regional transportation

3:59

coordination plans so every state is required to do that

4:04

and this is an opportunity for you to be at the table to discuss

4:10

the transformation transportation needs of persons with disabilities

4:18

so one of the things we did was we invited everyone involved in transportation to

4:23

the table so we wanted to bring everybody together who are the funders the providers who

4:29

are the stakeholders and especially the consumers having the consumers there to

4:34

have a voice as well so out of this one of the great things

4:40

and i wish i could have found our own logo but we created the wwr tcc

4:48

which is the western wisconsin regional transportation collaborating council we had a wonderful little logo with a

4:56

sign with a road going down the middle but one of the things that we struggled

5:02

with was developing a mission so we talked about all of the different transit dependent uh

5:09

populations and who we needed to write to buy to provide transportation to

5:16

and it was one of our key stakeholders that came up with our little mission was

5:21

develop transportation options for all transit dependent persons not just persons with disabilities look

5:27

at the needs of older adults look at the needs of low-income persons as well

5:33

all of those individuals in your service area that we consider to be transit dependent

5:38

in other words not having access of their own to transportation

5:43

and then what we did was we invited everyone to a transportation summit that we hosted at uw stout a college in our

5:50

area and it was a great summit we really were able to address a lot of the barriers

5:57

that existed with transportation and then really come up with some

6:03

some really good ideas on how to meet the gaps in transportation

6:10

and then you need to keep the momentum going so working with your partners to advocate for increased state funding is

6:16

one of the big ones there are a lot of other agencies out there that struggle with transportation

6:23

just like independent living centers and bringing everyone together in a coordinated ad

6:29

advocacy effort especially on the statewide level is key

6:35

bringing all the partners together and then again those regional coordination plans

6:41

every state requires them we have them on a regional basis operated through our um

6:48

transportation coordinating councils but again it provides an opportunity

6:53

bobby has always been at the table with these regional plans

7:00

and then working with other independent living centers

7:06

so one of the key things that is great is we have eight independent living centers here in wisconsin

7:13

and currently we are working with three of our eight centers here

7:19

so because there is strength in numbers so the independent living centers working together

7:26

when we started our program um it began really with a small grant

7:35

that we had received from the saint croix county office on aging so in wisconsin we call it our

7:41

85-21 program every state has a different name for it but it's that pool of money that goes to

7:49

the counties for providing in wisconsin what they refer to as elderly and disabled

7:55

transportation so they had some money left over and were looking to meet the transportation

8:01

needs of people living in predominantly rural areas

8:06

then we had the saint croix valley disability disability coalition which was able to get some united way

8:13

funding so united way we rely a lot on our grant foundations

8:19

here united way was a great starting block

8:25

it allowed us to start with initially it was a voucher program

8:31

so vouchers are a little bit different than volunteer drivers in that the individual needs to find their own

8:37

transportation and then the individual giving them a ride can

8:42

get reimbursed um for that trip using the volunteer drivers we take that

8:49

out so we're able to provide the trip and and the ride ourselves

8:55

and then the center for independent living took over doing a lot of the payroll i'm doing the reimbursement for drivers

9:01

we started shifting to a larger volunteer driver program

9:06

in our 10 counties so bobby will talk a lot about the volunteer drivers and need to recruit

9:12

them and then how the program expanded so we

9:18

got some foundation grants we're lucky to have two large uh

9:23

philanthropic foundations one is the bremer our b-r-e-m-e-r

9:30

and then the anderson foundation which is connected with anderson windows

9:35

and then we had reached the point where our program was large enough to where we were able

9:42

to receive the 5310 transportation dollars so when the surface transportation bill

9:48

was reauthorized and developed the 5310 uh program for rural transportation

9:55

we were able to apply for those uh that funding and then from there the program really

10:02

took off so how the program expanded initially we

10:07

were in our 10 counties and then we started working with north country independent living center

10:13

so they are the independent living center directly to the north of us connected with lake superior and then

10:20

coming down to our 10 counties so now we're operating in 18 counties

10:27

and from there we started to contract with other counties

10:32

similar to what we had done with saint croix county that had their 85-21 program

10:39

and essentially word spread so here we have this independent living

10:44

center that has this volunteer driver program and so the

10:50

county started to come to us and asking us to contract to provide the

10:55

services really in the rural areas that they weren't able to provide those trips

11:02

so once again we were able to tap into that county funding as the program began to expand

11:11

so any questions at this time that people might have

11:18

i will stop sharing my screen for a minute i've kind of covered a little bit with the beginning

11:27

and just remember if you have a question you can select the raise hand or star nine

11:34

or you can drop them in the q a box

11:43

my takeaway from all of this to really emphasize is one working with all of your partners

11:50

collaboration is one of the biggest keys but then looking for opportunities grant

11:55

funding foundations counties other ones bobby will go into a lot more detail but

12:01

currently here in wisconsin we contract with managed care organizations

12:06

and the iris program which is a self-directed medicaid program

12:17

and there is one in the q a box now all right so was there a need to address

12:25

accessible vehicles for providing transportation ah very good question yes

12:31

there was so here is one of the major issues when you have volunteer drivers not many of

12:37

them have access to a lift equipped vehicle so we were able to get some foundation

12:43

dollars um to purchase a lift equipped vehicle not only

12:49

did we go with the lift equipped vehicle but we went with a lift equipped vehicle with a 42-inch ram

12:57

and a heavy-duty suspension system rear suspension

13:02

so that our vans are able to accommodate people in oversized or bariatric

13:07

wheelchairs as well because we saw that as one of the needs

13:16

some programs only take you to medical appointments what about leisure activities

13:22

great question so when we began it was not about medical it was about social

13:28

recreational we provide trips of all kinds bobby can

13:34

go into a little bit more detail on that but no it was not just about medical

13:40

one of the things we wanted to ensure was that people had access to do social

13:45

recreational um grocery shopping you name it

13:50

we wanted to open it up to really to what the people's needs

13:55

were so great question yes we've always gone beyond medical the only time we had to

14:04

go to stop that was during the pandemic and when the pandemic hit we began

14:09

losing some voluntary drivers um and had to go to just life essential

14:15

trips which was medical nutrition and employment but i'm

14:21

happy to say we have now expanded and have opened it back up for all of our

14:27

trips

14:32

so when working with coag do you reimburse them for the trip and

14:39

are the riders considered a consumer under the seal under cil good question we do not open people in

14:46

our transportation program as a consumer transportation operates a little bit

14:53

different outside of our regular consumer services and it would be difficult

15:01

to open every one of those riders as consumer develop a goal sheet and all of those that go along with being an open

15:08

cell consumer the other one what are your hours of operation

15:13

it varies um we have we have all kinds of trips early morning

15:20

late evening we try to keep it within um always operation for our drivers but

15:27

i'll let bobby and go a little bit more answering that question so if you want

15:32

to bobby okay i'm sorry could she repeat the

15:38

question i had something pop up on my screen trying to close it out it was what are our hours of operation

15:46

oh okay we have different hours our actual office hours are 8 to 4 30 monday

15:51

through friday our drivers though they drive 24 hours a day seven days a week

15:57

so every day of the year even christmas thanksgiving all holidays

16:02

so uh do you also encourage the writer for

16:08

medical to use dhs or other medical transportation first yes

16:13

so one of the things is we do not compete um

16:18

with if there is federal funding being provided we don't compete with that so

16:24

to give you an example if it was a city that had a paratransit service we would not operate in that area if there was a

16:31

smaller community that had a federally funded shared ride program

16:37

we would not we don't overlap or duplicate services that's one of the things that really came out when we were

16:44

doing our transportation summit was the amount of duplication that went on you

16:49

could have vehicles following each other down the road all going to the same place

16:55

so we made sure the fact that we weren't duplicating any services so if a person is eligible for a

17:02

medicaid trip they usually will go through our medicaid broker here in wisconsin

17:11

do you have a member memo of understanding between yes so we do uh a number of mous and a

17:21

number of contracts as well with both the counties the managed care

17:26

organizations um the independent living centers so bobby coordinates

17:33

so many contracts i don't know if she can keep track of them half the time

17:46

were most of the people providing transportation clients or others no so they are not direct consumers of

17:52

ours um generally they get referred a lot of the counties

17:59

um managed care organizations whoever the funder is are generally the ones that

18:04

are calling to book the ride and can you provide uh mou template sure

18:11

um we have i can have bobby provide a template at the end of the training to send it out to individuals

18:18

of some of the mousse that we've done or contracts in the past she'll have to clean and sanitize them

18:24

to make sure they don't contain any confidential information but otherwise we would be happy to share that

18:36

so at this point i am going to turn it over start sharing my screen again and turn

18:42

it over to bobby to continue our presentation

19:08

you can just let me know when you're ready kyle all right go ahead bobby okay so

19:14

i'm bobby the director of transportation um and so the first one is how is the program

19:22

funded i end up writing the new freedom grant for the 5310 funding

19:28

um and then we also have 8521 contracts with different counties

19:33

i think right now we actually are contracted with three maybe four

19:38

counties for their 85 21 money and it disappeared kyle

19:46

that's okay so we have five because we work with the adrcs

19:52

i also write community foundation grants we just maybe two months ago got the

19:58

hometown health grant through mayo we i also write in for the anna bremer

20:03

foundation the hugh anderson foundation which kyle mentioned earlier um

20:08

the two foundations out of bremer foundation and the hugh anderson foundation we actually purchased our

20:14

vans with the money from those two so um is there should be one more slide

20:21

does it list other fundings during the pandemic too they also came

20:27

out with um other just money and grants that you could fill out

20:33

and so i filled out all of those they're like each for five thousand we do manage care organizations we are contracted

20:40

with inclusive lakeland and cwi which is my choice we do the iris program in the

20:46

department of workforce development and the recovery wellness consortium and what that is here it used

20:54

to be wrwc and now it's just wrwc

20:59

we do crisis right 24 hours a day we provide crisis rides to stabilization

21:06

homes that way if they they're in a safe place they're not having to go to jail they're

21:12

not having to go or stay in a position where they feel unsafe so they will go to

21:19

their local hospital or even to the sheriff's office or the police

21:25

station and our drivers who are trained for crisis rides will go pick them up and transport them to either the safe

21:32

home in chipwa or the safe home in eau claire

21:38

how the program works your traditional volunteer driver program

21:44

um obviously we recruit everywhere we recruit in every county

21:50

recruiting is almost like 24 hours a day for me if i'm talking to someone i will

21:55

bring it up like hey do you know anybody or if you would like to to if you have time to give rides or

22:03

they're friends maybe so just word of mouth uh we had a little bit for um recruiting

22:10

but i found out that since most of our drivers are older they're not on the computer or facebook

22:17

or any of that it's easier for them if i go out and hang signs like a quick trip or

22:23

if there's people who gathered to do the all car shows i put them there so there

22:29

the older population is more into going face to face

22:34

we do reimburse our drivers at the federal rates right now it is 56 cents

22:39

per mile one of the things i found the best that works is the tear off sheets it talks

22:45

about how much they're reimbursed and then they just tear off the phone number those are very good at quick trip and

22:51

other places where there's always a crowd they just can pull the number off and go and call us when they have time

22:59

next the digital headlines in the senior center paper

23:05

those are where they work they're very nice if they what you can do is go online if you get

23:12

the senior paper and when you click on the headline it will take you right to our webpage which

23:18

allows them to read about us um actually all of our programs within the

23:25

within our service within the center it'll tell you about that and they can fill out the application on

23:33

on our webpage um we also do letters sent to churches to veterans um

23:41

yeah go back thank you to the legions and like i said earlier any place where there's a crowd

23:48

even at the vas if you go into the driver's lounge you hang them there we

23:53

share drivers if there's somebody who has a program for example like chippewa has a veterans

24:00

bus that goes to the va and we we will work with them if they have only

24:06

one person going we'll take them if we their bus isn't full they'll take ours so we collaborate with them and

24:13

they also help us recruit so we have drivers that we ask if you want to drive for other

24:19

programs so that you can be driving for more than one program go ahead kyle next

24:30

okay then we have a regional driver training so when i recruit a driver he goes to a

24:36

couple of trains we do three background checks on him or her and then

24:42

um i train them to locally drive for us of all the rules they get a manual

24:49

what can and can't be done and how they do their logs what their responsibilities are

24:55

everything like that then once a year i have a regional driver training that drivers can

25:00

[Music] come from all over the state and attend the driver training we just had

25:07

it we were limited to the amount of drivers because of the pandemic so we had 70

25:14

i think it was 75 to 80 drivers um kyle do you want to read the question

25:21

and i answer it now or do you want me to answer them at the end

25:32

so one of the questions here is how does the funding for transportation for employment work

25:37

does vr paid for rides it's what does vocational rehabilitation

25:43

pay for rides yes okay so for employment we actually only

25:49

do employment we use new freedom funding and we have used dvr um and we've used

25:54

some iris but um it's only good for 30 days we provide the transportation for 30

26:01

days and then at the end of the 30 days they should have found someone that they could maybe ride

26:07

with or they worked long enough to save for down payment on a car but we only provide for 30 days

26:13

unless we are with inclusive which very very very seldom would

26:19

approve of an employment ride but we do have some agencies that we can work with and go a little longer but

26:25

normally is 30 days and i seen a question about insurance

26:30

because that's always but i don't see it now

26:37

it's in the chat um oh okay are there any are there any insurance liability

26:43

considerations taken before taking on individuals okay someone's asking about a background

26:50

check all right i can answer both so background checks there's three of them we do the wisconsin circuit court

26:57

we also do the family watchdog for sexual predators and then we do what i call a bid it's

27:02

actually for personal care workers that do a thorough background

27:08

check on them so if at any time because we got we receive tot money

27:15

if they have any violent crimes or like money crimes and

27:21

violence against elderly or duis anytime doesn't matter if they were 17 or they

27:28

were 20 and they're 50 now they cannot drive for us um d.o.t does not allow that

27:36

and we do require all of our drivers to uh have insurance as well

27:41

and um we do have an umbrella policy as well

27:46

for our center that is we're able to cover our drivers as well

27:52

right so that's where i was going to next there is

27:58

so they carry their own insurance and like kyle said we do have an umbrella the

28:03

problem with that is when they go to their insurance company and they say oh i'm volunteer driving

28:10

then they the insurance company wants to treat them as if they're a taxi cab or like a uber or something like that

28:17

however that is not what they are volunteer drivers are like if your

28:23

neighbor came to pick you up and take you to the doctor we are along with war working on

28:30

legislation to make sure that that can't happen to volunteer drivers there are

28:36

there is a list of drivers insurance companies that will not charge you for

28:41

being a volunteer driver and when a driver calls me and says hey my insurance company says this then i

28:47

send them the letter from the wisconsin insurance and they present that to their insurance companies because it should

28:54

they don't they're not cabs and they're not ubers so um

29:00

so to list them again the three backgrounds is we do the wisconsin circuit court

29:07

we do what's called family watchdog and those two are free on the internet

29:13

then the bid which is the background they use i guess human services use it

29:19

uses it that cost seven to ten dollars to do a thorough background a

29:24

caregiver's background check on them so everything shows up

29:32

okay so if you want to go back one slide there the regional

29:39

driver training like you said we just had there was 75 to 80 drivers from other programs and our

29:45

program that day no one gets appointed a ride everybody knows that

29:51

they have other transportation providers that day we train them they have an appreciation

29:58

lunch this time they were trained on hipaa and dementia they're always

30:03

required and so is the bloodborne pathogens those are required to do each year then we

30:10

also did a mental health part of it we did a companion dog and

30:19

wow i'm trying to think what else so but it's all day long but we kind of mix it with fun they get their training so that

30:24

they're only pulled off the road that day you're not pulling drivers off like oh hey it's this time for your hipaa

30:31

training and a month later for your dementia so we do it all in one day and they have a good time meeting other

30:37

drivers and they also meet their dispatchers probably for the first time some of them because otherwise they just

30:44

meet their dispatcher on the phone see do the drivers also receive a disability awareness training yep it

30:50

changes every year on what i add besides the hipaa

30:56

and dementia so this was just what was for this year we've had different

31:01

disabilities like an expert trains and comes in we've done adaptive equipment we've done

31:08

sensitivity those so far i can think of in the past but we do a lot of training on different

31:14

disabilities so all right the next slide

31:19

this is individual training driver driver training this is what they receive before

31:24

they attend the original they're given the manual and i meet with them for about an hour and a half and with any

31:30

other questions that they may have they're trained on our mission statement and what that is who we are what we

31:36

believe how their role as a volunteer driver is vital they have to fill out logs logs are

31:43

actual legal documents so they have to know how to fill them out they can't be full of mistakes

31:48

or corrections or any of that they have to be correct um because they go to a

31:55

support person and she matches that with google so they are taught about confidentiality

32:03

alcohol and drugs and when i say this it's rare for both sides as a driver and

32:08

what could be expected from the rider the writer also has a list that they

32:14

have to fill out about confidentiality um about the alcohol and drugs and

32:20

eating in the cars and drinking and the seatbelt their social media and the sexual

32:27

harassment we keep up on that they are trained on sexual harassment as far as um

32:34

writers harassing them or staff in the office or vice versa them

32:40

doing that so they are trained on quite a bit that day next kyle

32:48

um collaboration and sharing resources with other agencies committees and boards

32:53

um so i think that the secret to transportation successful transportation

32:59

is just collaborating with everybody around you we are all heading for the same goal

33:06

and we all have some money but if we all work together that money goes twice as

33:11

far to make sure that everybody has and can get a ride um one of some of the

33:19

committees i work for i'm vice president for wham which is the wisconsin association of mobility managers i also

33:26

chair willing and willing is the is wisconsin independent living network

33:32

and i am the chair for the transportation part i also sit on transit commissions

33:39

saint croix the transit coordinating committees also in dunn county barron county

33:45

i attend as kyle had said to you about the rural planning i think last year i

33:51

attended over 20 or the year before before the pandemic so it's even been

33:56

longer than that i am present at every once so that i can say this is what we could do to help

34:04

um and we're part of their plan their five-year plan

34:09

so what are the barriers um the barriers are everything that makes

34:15

the program good i have to say that is the recruitment of drivers especially

34:20

now during a pandemic is very hard um i was out recruiting still but people

34:28

are scared they don't want to get it and bring it home to their family

34:33

some of them have partners too that are really at risk for getting it that

34:39

type of thing they're drivers who don't want to wear the mask but we require that so they're not driving for us so we

34:45

don't require that anymore um so the other part is the financial

34:51

stability yes we all write grants but yes there's more people applying for the

34:56

same pot of money so it's becoming very aggressive type to apply for a grant

35:03

there's state funding everything like that the insurance laws for volunteer drivers that we talked about a few

35:08

minutes ago

35:14

we are working and i am sorry because i'm trying to remember the name of the bill and kyle knows it because kyle's

35:20

working on it for them to ask legislators and to support the increased

35:26

volunteer driver reimbursement rate to match the federal rate and when the

35:31

bill first came out and kyle if you remember you guys are working on this to get it changed because it said

35:37

20-something cents and it needs to be changed to be the current federal rate

35:44

yes i always encourage people um

35:49

to it's called the volunteer driver tax appreciation act which would change uh the

35:58

irs reimbursement rate which is currently 13 cents a mile

36:04

for volunteer drivers to match the federal rate and the only reason that this exists is because when the law was

36:11

written for volunteer driver for the reimbursement rate it was 13 cents a mile but they never included that it

36:18

should increase as the federal rate increases so this is a little known piece of

36:24

legislation that was introduced by two congressmen in from minnesota and i

36:32

am trying to get momentum for this

36:40

so how effective has the program built program been

36:45

so if you build it they will come and that happened um we increased and we increased by the

36:52

year last year during the pandemic

36:57

we still did and just doing doctor to medical appointments we still did over 30 000 rides

37:05

we normally in a when there's no pandemic we can go anywhere from 60 to 85 000 rides in a

37:12

year is it difficult to keep up with the increased need as people learned about

37:17

the program yes when this program started i was one of

37:22

the dispatchers and now we have six dispatchers

37:28

and we have a support person that that's all she does is keep track of the log she processes

37:34

about 3 000 logs per month on an average basis

37:40

a lot of times it's more but that's what her average is

37:46

finding additional funding has been the biggest hurdle to overcome for this program

37:53

do you limit the amount of miles per ride example 100 miles per month we do not

38:00

they can go wherever they like we are one of the programs that can cross state lines we've been

38:05

we're in wisconsin we go to minnesota all the time we go up into michigan we cover like i said all of that we've

38:13

also been out to south dakota so there's no limit the only limit that we have is that a driver has to be

38:20

within 45 minutes of the rider or 45 miles i'm sorry of the rider

38:26

to be able to pick them up when you get up into the rural areas of our program up in like forests florence

38:34

wood oneida up in those right on the michigan border it's 65 miles that a

38:40

driver can drive to pick up a rider so there are no limits as to where they can go or how many miles

38:47

we do with some of our contracts if the ride is over 100 miles the dispatcher

38:53

does have to call that program and get approval for that trip

38:58

but most of them let it happen they agree to do the funding for that um we do check if

39:06

someone needs like the lady who went to south dakota the reason that she had to go there because it was the closest

39:11

doctor to do the procedure for what she needed um so when they get that high we do make

39:17

sure that they can't get the service nearby uh sierra i believe we're coming close

39:24

to the end of our time and i know that there was a couple questions yet okay

39:31

but i can bobby jesus wanted to go over the numbers quick okay i'll go quick so you

39:38

see in 2005 we did 512 rides in 2020 we did 21 520

39:45

you see the trip and the difference in the cost that went out um since we started the medical rides

39:51

have increased by 200 social increased by 88 education training 74

39:59

independent living increased by 55 employment increased by 125

40:05

nutrition increased by 36 no shows and cancellations dropped by eight percent

40:10

next slide this is a four year average what we've learned volunteer drivers and vouchers are a great resource to meet

40:17

the transportation needs of persons that with disabilities living in rural areas

40:24

when used in coordination with other transportation program it can provide a level of transportation where no other

40:30

options exist so do you have questions that i can answer

40:37

real fast or well one of the questions was i see somebody had you mentioned dispatchers

40:42

are they volunteer or paid those are your pages all of our pictures we currently have

40:49

three or four and are actually looking to hire two more

40:54

yes so our transportation is one of our largest growing programs here at the center

41:00

okay will the drivers miles begin they begin the moment that that he gets in his car and backs out of the driveway so

41:06

they get paid from the time they leave their driveway so they are back in the driveway

41:13

we still have 15 minutes kyle oh sorry oh maybe we don't

41:26

okay i see one of the other questions was on

41:32

disability awareness yes one of the things that we've always done with the driver training is disability awareness and

41:39

i've enjoyed the fact that myself as an individual with a disability has been able to do that awareness

41:46

training in the past but we have staff from our center that do that on a regular basis so the drivers do get that

41:53

disability awareness training as part of there justine do you have self-drivers that

41:59

yes so the ones that have that are self drivers that's what our voucher program can be for also

42:05

if they don't have the money for gas what they do is i send them a form they submit where they're going to go for a

42:12

month and how much it costs and then we will reimburse them half of that

42:18

um then that's the same way with the voucher program if they have their own driver and their own car

42:23

we take the miles and miles for that whole month and we split it in half and we give them a check for that to help

42:30

out

42:37

any other questions there's one more that popped into the q

42:43

a box okay um have your drivers lost dispatcher

42:49

experienced language barriers when it comes to calling from passengers yes we have

42:56

um we have a writer who only speaks spanish and so we've had difficulty

43:04

she speaks broken english um and so we tried to talk to her we did

43:10

have a spanish-speaking dispatcher who would talk to her and take care of her um she is now gone but there is a phone

43:18

number where we can call and we can get an interpreter that will listen and interpret

43:24

her to us

43:30

how can i find a similar program in my area um i'm sorry grace but sometimes there's

43:36

areas that that service but you should could look for your adrc or your

43:42

independent living center and they could tell you where you could find something like that

43:50

one of the issues that we've always found is states being able to keep up on all the transportation services that

43:57

are being provided wisconsin at one time is trying to keep an ongoing

44:04

directory of all of the transportation programs but it got to the point where they come

44:10

and go sometimes frequently that it's hard to keep an updated list

44:16

especially of what trips they provide what are their rates what are their hours of operation

44:22

that seems to be an ongoing thing so really having access to know

44:29

what resources are available for transportation in your area can be a barrier for people as well correct

44:37

usually our staff for transportation we are the ones who work on that manual that tells everybody

44:43

in calling and finding how much they charge at some point that will be

44:49

put on our web page so that people can go there and look to see who is providing in our western region here who

44:56

provides what type of transportation they provide and what the costs are but it is very time consuming because they

45:03

change all of the time we have one person with their hand up as

45:10

well um i've allowed you to talk it's april 2021

45:15

if you want to uh mute

45:31

first and so how are the volunteers giving a stipend or

45:36

are they paid how does that work a little bit more i'm somehow that didn't sink in and do you folks

45:44

train other folks in other states on how to do this okay so they are paid or reimbursed

45:52

because they're not employees they are volunteers they're reimbursed 56 cents a mile they do the legal documentation

45:58

with the law and so they're reimbursed um simply at the

46:04

federal rate and there's not they're they're not given a stipend or anything on top of that no they're not

46:10

okay okay and then yes i get i travel to other areas to

46:16

train to teach them about this i was out in breckinridge colorado um i got calls

46:22

from alaska so i do go and show people how to start this program and that type

46:28

of thing yes okay well that's wonderful i'm i'm in north carolina and we have a lot of rule this seems like a really

46:35

good program we have a lot of rural areas and not a lot of solutions right um the new

46:41

freedom program is actually a uh model program and we are the largest volunteer

46:47

program in the country right now okay well it's wonderful what you're doing thank you thank you

46:54

thank you we right now have a 160 volunteer drivers but we're always recruiting so

47:03

it doesn't come easy um let me tell you it's been 20 years of doing this um and growing slowly

47:11

um starting from four counties to 10 counties to 18 counties

47:16

now we're actually in 42 counties so working with our other independent

47:21

living centers so our program is operating in over half the state of

47:26

wisconsin right now so it's a major achievement we are currently looking to contract with our

47:33

medicaid our new medicaid broker um

47:38

though there are some additional hurdles we'll have to overcome one of them would be

47:44

[Music] random drug testing is something that we currently don't do

47:50

but would need to include um

47:56

so expansion is always on our mind we're actually looking at one point

48:03

um we have another independent living center that wants us to move into their service area

48:09

but we found that slow and steady is the way to go because especially recruiting volunteer

48:16

drivers as bobby has pointed out can be difficult so you need to have the capacity

48:22

um with the drivers to be able to provide the service

48:29

yes and i have to say we have some excellent drivers they are so committed

48:36

um they go way above and beyond what they need to do as volunteer drivers during the pandemic

48:43

um the elderly work where oh i lost the word but anyway so

48:50

chippewa county called and asked if some of our drivers could pick up groceries and take them to the vulnerable people

48:57

who were quarantined at home and so of course some of our drivers volunteered

49:02

and they're still picking up their groceries and delivering it to their homes so and this normally is not allowed during

49:09

for the 53-10 money because we are not we don't haul packages we haul people

49:15

but during the pandemic we are allowed to do that so nope they um there is no requirement for

49:21

their vehicles except that they need to be safe like the tires are safe air conditioning heating windshield wipers

49:30

lights all of that that it's in safe condition and then they can drive so we do look at that

49:36

before kyle mentioned the contract with the new nemt and that's one of them they will

49:42

inspect the cars also so i'd like to make the point too that

49:49

every state receives the federal 5310 money it's all about how your state is using

49:55

that money a lot of times where you really want to have some input um

50:01

i always get a kick out of when i talk with billy from april who likes to point out to me that in

50:06

arkansas they like to use that money just for vehicles so really

50:13

it's working with your state we are the largest recipient um our program is of that 5310

50:21

um federal money that that comes through the state of wisconsin so it's an always a great opportunity to

50:30

advocate for where that 53-10 dollars are going and that they can support

50:35

programs similar to like to what we've developed there is a question do any of the

50:41

drivers assist in the store with the client they do not because of liability today

50:48

our drivers don't touch them they don't carry their bags they have to

50:53

be ambulatory to get in and out of the car um the driver doesn't even knock on the

50:58

door he calls inside and they come out um but that's due to liability which is

51:05

really sad because it's hard for some of our drivers just to watch people struggle a little bit to carry

51:10

everything but they do not go inside the storage just to drive them and take them there

51:21

any other questions because this question is still up but we answered that about the volunteers stuff

51:31

and i see in um the chat there was a comment of is there a way that you could

51:38

share more or um get a copy of this and so i'm assuming you're talking about the

51:43

recording and any references to resources they link they mentioned it will be on the april conference website

51:50

the recording will be added there on this evening so you can go back and see this again and then their resources

51:56

they've mentioned or either shared today are also there or will be there and there is another question is there a

52:02

liability to sell at all um nope there's none right now like you

52:08

said we do have an umbrella policy if something happens and

52:14

to the limit of their insurance policy then ours kicks in but they sign a waiver

52:19

releasing sill of any liability and i see we have a question of can a

52:25

caregiver ride with a participant yes they can a rider is always allowed

52:30

to bring a caretaker one person with them at no charge

52:39

and then we do have one hand up

52:45

okay you can go ahead april 21.

52:53

um this is pat again i used to give a lot of folks a ride um

52:59

i'm a pretty big community volunteer and then one day a friend of mine told me that she was scared literally to

53:06

death um in a way she she does it um well she's she

53:11

doesn't volunteer but she she takes client's place to doctors uh

53:16

as part of her job and but i got to thinking about the liabilities

53:22

uh there are a lot of substance use problems uh in our area now and a lot of people that

53:29

need rides would be from this population and it came to light that a lot of them

53:36

that we were giving rides to and stuff had drugs with them when we were giving

53:41

them rides and if you went through a road check or got pulled over how would you handle that because

53:49

they're gonna dump it under your seat and if they don't admit are in the car somewhere if they see you're coming up

53:55

on the cops and then if you're the owner of the car you're the one going to be charged i

54:00

guess unless somebody else says it's mine so how are you handling this sort of thing

54:06

well a couple of ways most of our rides i shouldn't say most a lot of our rides

54:12

come through inclusive for people who are already going through recovery and that type of thing

54:18

um and they've already been checked out and deemed safe before they ever get into

54:23

one of our cars so um

54:29

we have never had that incident um knock on wood but usually our riders are checked out and deemed safe before we're

54:36

ever given them a ride

54:42

thank you because i i will say that you know since i give a lot less people rides these days than i used to for that

54:50

reason because i you know if you don't know him that well and

54:55

but you know that there's a little history there it it it makes you a little reluctant i mean and that's sad

55:01

but that's that's the state we're living in right now and you're correct we you know our rides

55:07

are mostly in rural areas to the we our money is ear tech for elderly and disabled and most of our rides are in

55:14

the rural areas to the elderly um and so that is not a big issue but i could see

55:20

how in a big city that would be a big issue very big so well i serve on a board

55:28

we serve it's going to be right now it's uh 22 counties but we're combining with

55:35

another county and halfway other counties we're going to have 31 counties it's an mco

55:41

across the state and it's mental health substance use and

55:47

idd populations so the population one of the populations

55:52

that needs rides the most would be the folks that have had substance use issues

56:01

and uh that i would be and of course the elderly and i do some volunteer work and

56:06

stuff with the veterans too but um you know this is the particular group

56:12

and the furthest i mean and the most rule is 31 counties in our state of 100

56:19

and many of them are rural counties that really need help but it's really kind of tricky when you're

56:24

putting them in your car and and they may have something on them and you may be risking your freedom

56:32

correct that's true and our crisis rides deal with people with mental health and um

56:38

addiction problems too and the drivers get extra training not everybody can drive for that program

56:44

they get extra training on how to be safe and and to remember that they're not a psychologist they're not

56:51

they are to put that person in their car and get them straight to the crisis house um

56:56

so they've added extra training to be able to deal with that most of those are men

57:02

um so i could see where you would be a little nervous being a female to you're not

57:08

sure who you're picking up um um so i see we're just about done but we've

57:13

included our contact information at the end anybody that would want to reach out to

57:18

us to learn more about how we've set this up or anything else we would be happy to share information with any

57:24

other independent living center that's out there and wanting to set up a similar program because it's all about meeting the needs

57:31

of our consumers thank you both for

57:37

presenting today this program is so wonderful thank you for sharing that scott thank you for moderating and

57:43

please if you'll see in the chat um we did drop the survey link in there if you'd like to go there

57:48

and complete that thank you so much um and we hope to see y'all in a little bit for our next session in 30 minutes

57:56

thank you thank you everyone